

277

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

✓

February 4, 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. MCGEOFFRE BUNDY
The White House

Re: Cuba -- and the Domestic Side of Foreign Policy

I hope that you will have a moment to take a second look at the public information arrangements on the Cuban problem.

Congressional interest in the entire Cuban issue is at an increasingly high level. Of 12 hours spent by Rush briefing the Foreign Relations and Foreign Affairs Committees thus far this year, the committees have queried him about Cuban matters for over 8 of those hours and would have kept him on that subject almost exclusively had he not kept trying to turn to problems in other parts of the world. The committees give every indication that they will want to hear him several more times before the subject will be exhausted even for the early part of the session.

More important from a public viewpoint, Senator Heatings' recurrent statements on the Cuban issue are again having the cumulative effect which they gained last fall up until mid-October. Congressional mail is mounting steadily; and the Republicans again see Cuba as the maggot of our Administration.

My immediate reason for writing is that the rest of the Government either properly or out of an excess of caution defers to the White House almost completely as to any public comment or release of information on this subject and the field at present is being left to Heating and our critics. The White House in the meantime has turned to other difficult problems or spaced its Cuban comments, leaving a public and Congressional vacuum to a considerable extent. Either Congressional spokesmen like Humphrey need to be moved into this situation quickly, or the Executive Branch needs to untangle the White House, State and Defense knot in which public communications are presently tied. The initiative for that, unfortunately, is going to have to come from your place.

Frederick G. Dutton